

Message Text

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TAGS: EINV, SGEN, SOPN, BE
SUBJ: EXAMPLES OF GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP - BELGIUM.

REF: STATE'S 51579

1. BELGIUM IS THE SITE OF A LARGE NUMBER OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. SOME OF THESE FIRMS IN MANY SMALL WAYS CONTRIBUTE WITHOUT OSTENTATION TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE LOCAL SOCIETY. WE SUBMIT HERewith A NUMBER OF EXAMPLES WHICH WE CONSIDER ILLUSTRATIVE.

2. THE UNITED FUND OF BELGIUM IS IN MANY RESPECTS A PRINCIPAL CHANNEL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS BY MANY SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE AMERICAN FIRMS. THE UNITED FUND IS ORGANIZED AND RUN BY U.S. COMPANIES. FOR SOME YEARS A LARGE CHEMICAL COMPANY HAD OFFERED ITS FACILITIES TO HANDLE SOLICITATION, UNDERTAKE THE MAILING AND COORDINATING THE NEEDED BOOKKEEPING. AT THE PRESENT TIME, AN AMERICAN AUDITING FIRM IS UNDERTAKING THIS WORK SO THAT VIRTUALLY ALL FUNDS CONTRIBUTED GO DIRECTLY TO WORTHY BELGIAN CHARITIES. ON AN ANNUAL BASIS BETWEEN FB 3,500,000 AND FB 4,000,000 (ABOUT \$ 129,000) ARE COLLECTED FROM THESE COMPANIES AND DISTRIBUTED TO BELGIAN CHARITIES, INCLUDING A MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS FUND, THE CANCER FOUNDATION, A HOME FOR THE BLIND, THE RED CROSS, OLD AGE HOMES, QUEEN
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FABIOLA FUND, ETC.

3. THE EMBASSY IS AWARE OF SOME OF THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL GIFTS AND NOTEWORTHY ACTIVITIES:

A) A LARGE AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURER LAST YEAR GAVE 1 MILLION BF (ABOUT \$32,000) TO THE KONING BOUDEWIJN FONDS

(SET UP ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25TH YEAR JUBILEE OF KING BAUDOUIN). THIS FIRM ALSO MADE SOME SIGNIFICANT CASH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY OF ANTWERP IN CONNECTION WITH THE CELEBRATION OF THE RUBENS YEAR.

B) A TELECOMMUNICATIONS MANUFACTURER GAVE A GIFT OF 1 MILLION BF TO THE EDITH CAVELL CLINIC TO HELP PAY FOR THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WING TO THE CLINIC BUILDING.

C) A TELEPHONE MANUFACTURING COMPANY FUNDED THE "FABIOLA DORP", WHICH IS A HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED. THIS SCHOOL HAS PLACE FOR 250 HANDICAPPED PERSONS. THE FIRM PAID FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND FULL EQUIPPING OF THIS SCHOOL. IT CURRENTLY FINANCES ITS OPERATIONS AND HAS AGREED, WHERE POSSIBLE, TO EMPLOY MANY OF THE HANDICAPPED GRADUATES.

D) A LARGE BELGIAN BANKING CHAIN MAKES A PRACTICE OF ORGANIZING ART EXHIBITS IN MANY OF ITS BRANCHES. MOST RECENTLY IT SET UP A SPECIAL EXHIBIT IN ITS HEADQUARTERS DEVOTED TO THE LIFE AND TIMES OF KING LUDWIG II OF BAVARIA.

E) A PROMINENT EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS OPERATION MADE "GENEROUS" GIFTS TO THE AVENUE LOUISE ASSOCIATION" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH IS A GROUP DEDICATED TO IMPROVEMENT OF THE BRUSSELS AVENUE AND ITS BEAUTIFICATION. WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE COMPANY, WORK ON SUCH IMPROVEMENT WOULD NOT HAVE MOVED FORWARD.

F) A MANUFACTURING FIRM SPONSORS A LOCAL FOOTBALL TEAM, SUBSIDIZING IT AND PROVIDING IT WITH UNIFORMS.

G) IN A EUROPEAN WIDE PROGRAM, AN AMERICAN PETROLEUM COMPANY GIVES ANNUALLY SIX TO EIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TECHNICAL STUDIES IN THE CHEMICAL FIELD.

H) A PETROLEUM FIRM HAS ORGANIZED A TWO WEEK COURSE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY FOR DOCTORS OF MEDICINE COMING FROM DEVELOPING NATIONS. THE COURSE IS WITHOUT CHARGE EITHER TO THE PARTICIPANTS OR TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

4. IN AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON THIS TOPIC BY AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD, SOME MEMBERS POINTED OUT THAT BELGIAN SOCIAL CHARGES ARE SO HEAVY AND SOCIAL LEGISLATION SO COMPREHENSIVE THAT COMPANIES HAVE LITTLE INCENTIVE, BOTH FOR PRACTICAL AND FINANCIAL REASONS, TO

BE PARTICULARLY IMAGINATIVE IN THIS REGARD. CHAMBERS

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